

Senators,

I have little in the way of a specific agenda to put before you, but rather I would like to use this opportunity to set out the guiding principles which shape my contribution to the University, to the Senate and with your support, as Vice Chair.

1) Shared governance

I understand that our administration reserves the right in many matters to have the final say. Nevertheless, shared governance in my view means a frank and open discussion about priorities, particularly with regards to spending. One of the lessons my students take from their capstone experience (a business simulation) is that seeing things from the perspective of another part of the organization helps them to make better informed trade-off decisions. That idea, looking at the opportunity cost and comparing the benefits of different spending proposals, is one that I believe is central to the notion of shared governance.

2) Respect for others

I recently talked with some of my students about their experiences at San Jose State, and some of the things they said were, to say the least, disturbing; not everyone on our campus treats our students with the respect that is a bare minimum for civil social interaction. This needs to be addressed.

3) Compromise and flexibility

In a meeting recently, a question came up as to whether we as faculty should “push back” on a directive that came from our administration. Pushing back seems to me to lead us towards confrontation and conflict. While on occasion it may come down to a binary choice, do we do something or not, my instinct is to look for a possible “third way”. We need not necessarily take situations and solutions as given, but try to find alternatives that meets the goals of both parties.

4) A rejection of silos and fiefdoms, and the fostering of productive collaboration

As chair of my college’s curriculum committee I have worked relentlessly for a number of years to frame questions, particularly those which appear as turf battles between departments, in terms of the holistic benefit to student learning. As chair of the Board of General Studies, my aim has been to try to make the GE approval process smooth and collaborative, rather than adversarial.

I hope I can count on your support.

Cordially,

Simon Rodan